

FOREIGN DEPARTMENT

IN CHARGE OF
LAVINIA L. DOCK



ORGANIZATION NOTES

REGISTRATION IN ENGLAND.—At the annual meeting of the Matrons' Council at St. Bartholomew's Hospital on January 30 the question of State registration of nurses was brought up for discussion. Mrs. Fenwick thought that the time had come when it should be definitely undertaken. She asked whether the Matrons' Council should undertake the work or a new society be encouraged having for its sole object the attainment of State registration. Personally she favored the latter plan, and was supported in this view by Miss Huxley, Miss Poole, and Miss Marquardt. The council decided that its Registration Sub-Committee should meet to consider the organization of a separate society.

The committee met on February 21, and decided to organize a society for the State registration of nurses. Their resolutions were as follows: (1) that trained nurses of three-years' experience who desire State registration shall be eligible as members; (2) that one hundred nurses should be enrolled before a meeting should be called to organize and elect officers; (3) that local secretaries should be at once appointed to arouse the interest of nurses and of the public in the movement; (4) that the public should be allowed to assist in the financing of the society; (5 and 6) that membership application forms should be circulated and the nursing journals asked to support the movement. Early in March it was announced by the Registration Sub-Committee of the Matrons' Council at an executive meeting that Miss Louisa Stevenson, of Edinburgh, had consented to become the president of the new society. [American nurses who were at the Congress will remember Miss Stevenson. We do not know anyone who is better fitted to lend prestige and weight to the movement for registration.—Ed.] It was decided to hold a meeting in London in May, at which Miss Stevenson will preside, when the constitution will be adopted and officers and committees elected. The enrolment list now bears nearly three hundred names.

We congratulate our English sisters on their conspicuous beginning and wish them all success. We will observe their future steps with the greatest interest.

GUY'S HOSPITAL LEAGUE.—A league of past and present nurses has recently been established at Guy's Hospital, one of the large London Schools for nurses. These leagues, similar to our *alumnæ* societies in every respect, will, it is hoped, in the future affiliate with the Matrons' Council to enter the International Council of Nurses.

THE LEAGUE OF THE ROYAL SOUTH HANTS NURSES.—This league is now in full working order, with Miss Mollett as president, and the certificate of the hospital as qualification for membership. A specially impressive feature of this new league is one of the clauses under "Objects," viz.: "To provide a means

whereby the certificated nurses of the Royal South Hants Hospital can collectively express their views on matters of interest and importance to the nursing profession, or, if desired, take action on the same." This shows public spirit and a sense of responsibility.

THE nurses of Victoria, Australia, have organized an association of two hundred and sixty members.

LETTERS

AMERICAN NURSING ABROAD—SWITZERLAND.—It is from the point of prophecy rather than that of history that one may speak of American nursing beyond the limits of our own land, for, be it told as a truthful statement, there is almost no such thing as American nursing abroad. One finds on the Continent American shoes, American bicycles, American bars (too often, these), American dentists everywhere, and now and then doctors, but in a long day's journey never a nurse holding a diploma from an American training-school, nor a hospital approaching our standards. In Paris there may be half a dozen nurses, and quite recently talk of an American hospital has been heard. The writer believes that in Rome there is an English and American Nursing Home, and she has come in contact with mission nursing done under the guidance of an excellent American nurse in Egypt, but this tells all there is to tell, so far as can be unofficially reported from the usual route of American travellers abroad. Miss Baxter, an American only by training, has told of her interesting and valuable work in Naples in recent issues of the JOURNAL, and she is quite capable of holding up the Neapolitan end of things, but what about the state of affairs elsewhere? Naturally, in justice to the principles of the Monroe doctrine ethically transferred to English ground, we have no desire to trespass in Great Britain or in any other land where nursing of our own standard can be found, but is there not a field for a few good nurses from our best schools on the Riviera, in the Italian cities, or in Switzerland, and for still more in Paris? The writer believes that the many Americans who annually come abroad or who make their homes in Europe would agree with her, and would gladly consign themselves to the care of their own countrywomen.

"The inglorious battle-ground of the bed and the physic bottle," as Stevenson put it, is wearisome enough at best, but its trials grow infinitely greater when located in a foreign land. Add a foreign tongue and foreign methods of nursing, and our invalid may be indeed miserable. The "cliniques" of European countries are most primitive attempts at our private hospitals, and the public hospital is out of the question. The French expression, "*prendre le chemin de l'hôpital*," is the equivalent of our idiom, "going to the dogs."

The invalid American, then, must get along as best he may in hotel or pension, with such care as his family or servants can give. If, in desperation, he does call in a "*religieuse*" or a "*garde-malade*," he is apt to wish he had not done so, and he gets rid of her at the first possible moment. He may have to pay her less than his home nurse demands, but what of that when he contrasts with this mournful, dark-robed, untrained nun or the domineering, aged, and but little better trained "*garde*" the nurse of his own country, bright, tactful, neat as a new pin, and full to the finger-tips of means whereby to make him

comfortable or beguile the time away. He wants his home nurse as a baby wants its mother, and if she were only here he would have her at any cost. So let her come and see for herself; not too many of her, of course, but a few women of highest character and best training. She *must* not be of the inferior type, for if she is, woe to her profession and to herself! If the temptations of life are too much for her at home, they will be many times too much for her in a foreign land, away from restraints and the protection of her alumnae society. But with the right motives the right women could establish themselves abroad and succeed from every stand-point. Small private hospitals might be established (here and there English nurses have already done this), these being also registries for a few nurses who would go out to cases. Not only Americans, but the foremost native physicians of the locality would soon discover the value of both hospitals and nurses and use them. No nurse might care to stay abroad more than a year or two, but another might then take her place by systematic arrangement, and so the benefits of foreign residence and the advantages of travel be extended to a number.

It would be wisdom for the nurse intending to try foreign work to investigate a field before deciding to occupy it. To the intelligent woman a number of means of doing this will suggest themselves. In most of the tourist towns there is a "Bureau de Resignements" which might give physicians' addresses on demand. Naturally, the greater acquaintance a nurse may have with foreign languages, the better for her as to managing servants and attending to all the small details of her venture. But even with an ordinary school knowledge of rules and a limited vocabulary, daily practice and study will soon put her in command of the essentials of foreign speech.

The question of rates of pay and hours of work should be well considered, and also that of uniforms. No labor is paid for in Europe at our home rates. Doctors' fees are much smaller than with us. Even in England a nurse receives less for her work than an American nurse at home, but her hours are shorter and the employment of several nurses on one case is more usual than with us. As to uniforms, one cannot say without further experience whether the Englishwoman's plan of adopting a uniform both in and out of doors or our own independence of uniform be the wiser.

We are proud of our calling and willing to announce it by our dress, yet do not see the necessity for making ourselves conspicuous in public places by what we may wear. Only discretion and tact can guide in this matter, as in so many others.

Again, to repeat, the only kind of woman who would succeed in Europe is the well-trained, high-minded, conscientious woman, quick to adapt herself to her surroundings, and of good business qualifications. She should not imagine that nursing in Europe would be a sort of holiday-making. Far from it. Her social position would have to be made and maintained by her own personality, and she would have to live down the foreign idea of nursing being a sort of domestic servitude, and of a "lady" being forbidden any serious work or occupation.

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ITEMS

NURSES IN THE PHILIPPINES.—We learn from private letters that there has been some disturbance of harmony between the nurses in the Philippines and the military authorities. The nurses were ordered to wash the dishes as a part of the daily routine, and refused to do so, finally being sent to their quarters by the commanding officer as an alternative. The difficulty was still unsolved at the time of our hearing of it, but Mrs. Kinney is now in the Philippines and will no doubt have matters arranged.

While we hold dish-washing as an occupation to be a perfectly honorable and womanly one, we are strongly of the opinion that only muddled, ineffective nursing can be done when nurses have to spend time in simple housework, and that for this reason the nurses were perfectly justified in their stand, and we hope they hold to it. It is economic waste to put a highly trained specialist at comparatively high salary to work which can be done by an untrained and inexpensive person, while, meantime, her own special work is undone or neglected. But military people have a marvellously perfected system of keeping subordinates in a constant state of change from one duty to another, so that one can never tell who is doing what.

A NURSE AS HEALTH OFFICER.—The city of Adelaide, in Australia, has a nurse employed as Health Office inspector. Her special work is the direction of the isolation and disinfection of contagions. She also is of great public value in educating the people in sanitation.

The employment of a trained nurse for this post was the suggestion of the City Health Officer of Adelaide, who must be a liberal and practical man. Other Australian States have shown interest in this experiment and promise to follow suit. The name of the nurse is Miss T. M. Sweetapple.

THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING learns on unquestionable authority that the announcement that Miss Florence Nightingale is lending assistance in the preparation of a "Life" of herself is unfounded. Miss Nightingale (unfortunately for all nurses) is very averse to having her life-work written of. The publication referred to can be, therefore, but a compilation of the few magazine articles already in print. Disappointing as this news is, we hope that when her "Life" ever is written, it will be written by a nurse.

"**NURSING NOTES**" for March reports a very interesting conference of the superintendents of the Queen's Jubilee Nurses in the North of England. Excellent and practical papers were read, of which we would especially like to see in full Miss Walker's on "Extra Nursing Help" and Miss Wilson's on "The Giving of Relief; the Coöperation of the Philanthropic Amateur; and the Advantages of the Charity Organization Society."

THE DUBLIN METROPOLITAN TECHNICAL SCHOOL FOR NURSES.—The annual report shows that during the past year thirty candidates had been sent up for the preliminary examination before being accepted for training. Eighteen lectures were given in anatomy, physiology, and hygiene, and three demonstrations in invalid cookery. A silver medal and a bronze medal were awarded to the two most proficient pupils.